

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

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AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN
CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L ISLAMABAD 3816

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, PK
SUBJECT: NATIONAL GOVERNMENT: WHAT'S ON SECOND?

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1. CHIEF MARTIAL LAW ADMINISTRATOR (CMLA) ZIA MET WITH POLITICAL LEADERS APRIL 5 IN THE "FIRST ROUND" OF FORMAL TALKS ON THE FORMATION OF A NATIONAL GOVERNMENT. MORE DISCUSSIONS ARE EXPECTED WHEN ZIA RETURNS FROM HIS TRIP TO SAUDI ARABIA (REFTEL B). ZIA FIRST MET WITH LEADERS OF THE PAKISTAN NATIONAL ALLIANCE (PNA) (WITHOUT THE NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC PARTY (NDP)), AND LATER WITH CONFIDENTIAL

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FOUR OF THE LEADERS OF THE "MODERATE WING" OF THE PAKISTAN PEOPLES PARTY, LED BY MAULANA KAUSER NIAZI.

2. AS NOTED REFTTEL A, THESE MEETINGS CONTINUED THE BARGAINING PROCESS ON THE CMLA'S PROPOSED NATIONAL GOVERNMENT WHICH, IF PAST EXAMPLE IN PAKISTAN TEACHES ANYTHINRPT WILL BE NOT UNLIKE BAZAAR HAGGLING. AFTER HIS SESSION, MAULANA NIAZI WAS FORTHCOMING

IN HIS COMMENTS TO THE PRESS. HE SAID THE PROPOSED NATIONAL GOVERNMENT WOULD "HELP PAVE THE WAY FOR ELECTIONS", ALTHOUGH HE SAID GENERAL ZIA TOLD HIM THAT ELECTIONS SHOULD NOT BE EXPECTED BEFORE NEXT YEAR. NIAZI ADDED LEAT HE WAS CONVINCED THAT COMMON GROUND COULD BE FOUND ON WHICH TO REST THE COALITION. THE MAULANA ALSO DISCLOSED THAT HE HAD DISCUSSED THE DETENTION OF POLITICAL WORKERS WITH THE CMLA AND THAT ZIA HAD PROMISED TO REVIEW THE CASES AND START RELEASING DETAINEES "SOON". NIAZI SAID THE CMLA WAS ALSO "DISPOSED TO THE VIEW" THET POLITICAL WORKERS SHOULD NOT BE FLOGGED IN THE FUTURE.

3. PNA LEADERS ON THE OTHER HAND, WERE MORE TIGHT-LIPPED. THEY REPORTEDLY TOLD ZIA THAT THEY WOULD MEET AGAIN ON APRIL 20 AND PRESENT HIM WITH THEIR OPINIONS ON THE 21ST. PNA PRESIDENT MUFTI MAHMUD APRIL 15 SAID HE STRESSED THE NEED FOR AN EARLY COMPLETION OF THE ACCOUNTABILITY PROCESS, AND THE NEED FOR "OTHER FORMALITIES", SUCH AS THE PREPARATION OF ELECTION ROLLS. MUFTI FELT MORE TALKATIVE APRIL 17, HOWEVER, AND HE TOLD NEWSMEN IN PESHAWAR THAT CMLA ZIA WOULD "BE PRESIDENT OR PRIME MINISTER IN THE NATIONAL GOVERNMENT". HE ALSO SAID THAT ZIA HAD "ASSURED HIM" THAT "NOTORIOUS ELEMENTS" OF THE PPP WOULD NOT BE ALLOWED TO JOIN A NATIONAL GOVERNMENT.

4. COMMENT: ZIA'S BATTLE TO FORM A NATIONAL GOVERNMENT WITH WHICH TO SHARE THE JOYS AND TRIALS OF GOVERNANCE IS FAR FROM OVER. HINTS OF VARIOUS CONDITIONS, SUCH AS NIAZI'S RELEASE OF
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POLITICAL DETAINEES, OR MUFTI'S CALL FOR A SWIFT END TO ACCOUNTABILITY, ARE STILL SERIOUS STICKING POINTS. ALSO UNRESOLVED IS THE QUESTION OF NIAZI'S PARTICIPATION, WHICH WOULD BE DISTASTEFUL AT BEST TO THE PNA. MORE POLITICAL HARDBALL IS EXPECTED UPON ZIA'S RETURN FROM RIYADH.
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